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RFK Says 3 Presidents OKd CIA Grants

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By WILLIAM THEIS

WASHINGTON, Feb. 21 (UPI)—Sen. Robert F. Kennedy, D-N. Y., whose familiarity with the spy agency goes back to the Bay of Pigs fiasco, said yesterday it was unfair to make the CIA "take the rap" for secretly subsidizing private organizations.

The former attorney general, brother of the late president, spoke up for the beleaguered Central Intelligence Agency during an interview in which he also:

• Endorsed the U.S. consular treaty with Russia, now pending in the Senate foreign relations committee.

• Opposed any unilateral reduction of American troops in Western Europe, but saw possibility of some "dual system" of troop redeployment—after "close consultation" with NATO allies.

Kennedy voiced his sympathy for the CIA, buffeted in a wave of protest reaction to the disclosure that it had channeled money through various foundations to student and other organizations with international activities.

With a rueful grin about "getting into another controversy," the senator told UPI:

"These basic decisions were not made unilaterally by the CIA, but by the executive branch—in the Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson administrations. All relevant government agencies are contacted for their approval. That includes the White House.

"If the policy was wrong, it was not the product of the CIA, but of each administration.

"We must not forget that we are not dealing with a dream world, but with a very tough adversary.

"I think it is unfair that the CIA should take the rap on this. Any of these decisions made by CIA had to have been approved by others."

The 41-year-old Democrat, who returned just recently from a European trip that thrust him into the middle of Viet Nam "peace feeler" speculation, called the CIA an "invaluable organization."

He said:

"It performs many useful functions to protect the security of the country. It has some of the most able, dedicated public servants in the government."

He indicated he did not wish to discuss specific cases of CIA involvement and said he had no ready answer as to how financial support of private international activities helpful to the nation should best be handled.

Kennedy made no reference to the ill-fated Cuban invasion attempt at the Bay of Pigs, which the CIA handled in the early months of the Kennedy administration.

The senator plans to spell out his views on Viet Nam—his opposition to the present bombing policy as well as his support on the basic American position—in a Senate speech soon. He returned from talks with government leaders in Britain, France, and West Germany concerned that the U.S. Viet Nam policy lacks understanding and support abroad.

Kennedy made it clear he had declined to co-sponsor Senate Democratic leader Mike Mansfield's resolution calling for a "substantial reduction" of U. S. NATO ground forces. Neither has he endorsed the alternative of his colleague, GOP Sen. Jacob K. Javits, of New York, which seems to fall closer to Kennedy's line of thinking right now.

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